

QUT ALIA 2004 mini-conference

27 September 2004, Queensland University of Technology, Garden's Point, Brisbane

While colleagues, employees and our peers busied themselves at the Gold Coast Convention Centre for the ALIA Biennial Conference, students too shared a portion of the event. Eight of the conference speakers kindly agreed to share ideas with students at a 'mini' ALIA conference at the Queensland University of Technology.

As a library and information studies student working and studying part-time with childcare problems, getting myself to the ALIA conference was not an option that I could entertain. Many students in similar circumstances took advantage of the opportunity not only to be introduced to the proliferation of conference ideas but importantly to ALIA as our professional body. This ALIA 'taster' proved invaluable for our own professional development of which the Association supports so fervently.

Eric Wainwright from James Cook University, Queensland state librarian Lea Giles-Peters, Roxanne Missingham from the National Library of Australia, Biddy Fisher from Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom, Debbie Dawson from Christchurch City Libraries, QUT's own Heien Partridge, University of Queensland's Sue Hutley and

Peter McCauley from Deakin University all contributed to a full day of presentations that left us inspired and confident — but realistic with the knowledge that career pathways are created by ourselves, for ourselves.

A major emphasis throughout the QUT library and information studies course is on professional development and reflective practice, so it was interesting to hear about the innovations undertaken in Christchurch City Libraries in a presentation from Debbie Dawson. 'Are you fit for the job and are you the best fit for the job?' introduced us to what Christchurch libraries are doing to encourage career development.

The fitness analogy is used in relation to specific behaviours, encouraging the workforce to keep their skills up-to-date, maintain learning goals and, as Debbie says, make it known that it is not okay 'to stand still and be a passenger'. Rather than question or cringe at in-house career workshops and development programs, staff have embraced these activities, and rightly so. Employees are discovering that their skills base equates to an expansion of opportunities both within and external to the library environment.

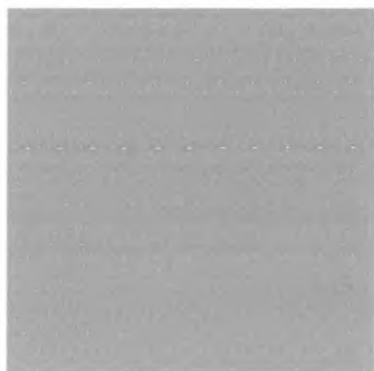
Finishing study and entering a library career is not the end of the journey. As stu-

dents it is important to recognise the shared responsibility of the individual, the employer and our professional association, ALIA, in the professional development process. ALIA's focus on career-long learning and CDP schemes offer both ourselves and potential employees a commitment to professionalism.

Like Debbie said, different career opportunities 'may not have a flashing neon sign on them with your name on it'. Workplace development sessions, value assessing and skills monitoring all contribute to highlight opportunities either within your workplace or externally. Like Debbie's New Zealand model, continued professional development gets you to think about your skills, fine-tune your specific interests and, ultimately, plan and consolidate career pathways.

Of course, special thanks go to the IT Faculty of QUT for sponsoring the event and the library and information services teaching staff, lead by Gillian Hallam, for their hard work in offering students invaluable exposure to conference ideas and specifically, ALIA.

Tracy Creagh, QUT student, Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies



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